The Unitarian Christian

Vol. 12 MARCH, 1957 No. 3

LIBRARY
STARR KING SCHOOL
NOT TO BE TAKEN FROM BUILDING

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL

THE SEARCH FOR ULTIMATE REALITY — Ford Lewis

DO WE KNOW HOW TO WORSHIP? — Editors

THE LORD'S PRAYER — Contributed

PROPHESY IN PART — Lawrence M. Jaffa

GOOD TONGUE — Ford Lewis

31459

EDITORIAL

An olden-time Brahmin would have been filled with dismay could he have made acquaintance with our modern Christian Easter. His complaint would have been that Easter symbolizes exactly what he dreads, and promises exactly what he is trying to escape—continued life. To him this life was an utterly futile, pointless and unhappy ordeal. The worst thing about it was that it could never be brought to an end. The soul's torment by no means ceased when his body was dissolved in death. The Wheel of Fate ground on, picked up this disembodied soul, and threw it back into the maelstrom of mortal existence in a new body. This relentless sequence of rebirths was the unendurable menace which his religion sought to dispel. What he sought was not the blessed hope that life would continue after death, but the blessed hope that it would not.

Something rather drastic must have taken place in our world during these last two thousand years to bring about such a change in man's feeling toward life. We think we know what it is: Mankind learned that there is such a thing as happiness, and that it is attainable. Miss Edith Hamilton tells us that the Athenians in their snug little city state first discovered happiness. Then Jesus appeared in another little city state, Jerusalem, and lived a life of such happiness that "still the beauty of that life shines star-like on our way." He was followed by Stephen and Paul and Ignatius and the glorious army of saints, apostles, prophets, martyrs who carried on his teachings so effectively that we can truthfully say: The basic incentive of Western Civilization is the greatest happiness of the greatest number.

This change in feeling toward life is the reason that Easter today is a day of optimism and promise. Even this life with all its perils and anxieties can bring us its periods of happiness, enough at least to make us want life, and dread its ending. This life is only one opportunity, far too brief and fleeting to satisfy us. But let not your heart be troubled. God's opportunities are like his love—inexhaustible. These earthly beginnings, so they be true, will not suffer interruption until they reach their consummation. These hopes and aspirations, so they be right, will continue until they reach their fulfilment.

C. E. P.

FORTUNE'S SLINGS

Naught to me are fortune's slings;
  Mind is both my sword and shield,
  I myself, the battlefield;
Strength I draw from secret springs.

Fortified, my spirit sings,
  Fearing not the foe-man, Fate.
  Let the bell toll soon or late,
Ready ay to try my wings.

—EUGENE R. SHIPPEN

THE UNITARIAN CHRISTIAN is published four times a year in October, December, March and May, by the Unitarian Christian Fellowship. (Dr. Amos B. Horlacher, *President;* Rev. Paul Harmon Chapman, *Vice President;* Miss Katherine V. Parker, *Recording Secretary;* Mr. Ralph Lazzaro, *Corresponding Secretary.*)

Editorial Board: Rev. Charles E. Park, Chairman; Rev. Charles C. Forman, Rev. Carl Bihldorff, Rev. Henry Hallam Saunderson, Rev. Alan G. Deale, Mrs. Herbert Lyman, Mr. Constant Wendell, Mr. Keith F. Warren.

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE: $1.00 a year payable to Treasurer, Constant Wendell, Unitarian Christian Publication Office, 102 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston, Mass.

Entered as second class matter at Boston Post Office, Oct. 25, 1954.

THE SEARCH FOR ULTIMATE REALITY

Dr. Ford Lewis

Immediately following the story of the Good Samaritan, which is taken as the classic illustration of Jesus' belief that the good life must include deeds of benevolence, there appears in the Gospel of Luke another story which seems to illustrate another very different point of view. Perhaps not a contradictory viewpoint, but at least supplementary. It is the account of Mary and Martha and the different emphasis which each of them gave to life.

Attempting to provide the kind of hospitality she thought appropriate for a distinguished caller, Martha became "distracted with much serving" and complained to Jesus that Mary was letting her do all the work. "Tell her then to help me," she requested. But Martha's request is denied with a mild rebuke. It is more important to listen to his ideas and share his thoughts, Jesus says, than to be concerned with matters of food and drink. Martha is over-anxious. She is fretting about petty details. She has missed the essential element in life. Only one thing is really needful and necessary. Mary has chosen that "good portion," and her choice is the better one.

What is the meaning of this existence of ours? What is the greatest good, the *summum bonum* of life? Is there a divine mandate which we ought to be aware of and in keeping with which we must conduct our lives? Or is it possible that life has no significance at all, that all this is but a cosmic, nightmarish joke, and that nothing really matters? Men have often disagreed concerning the specific meaning of life, but mankind presents a united front, practically speaking, on the proposition that life has *some* meaning.

To Jesus, the main object was to "seek first the Kingdom of God." To Socrates, it was to obey the divine imperative which he felt striving within his mind and heart. To another it may be the acquisition of wealth or power or fame or happiness. But all of us have some goal, openly arrived at, it may be, or secret even to ourselves. And our daily efforts are bent, with varying degrees of effectiveness, toward attaining that overriding objective which we have set in the heavens as our guiding star.

In developing a system of values, most of us fall into the personality category represented either by Mary or Martha. Mary and Martha were sisters living in the same house. Both recognized the fact that a guest was present in the house. To Martha, this meant one thing—the obvious necessity of cooking and serving a meal. To have sat at the feet of Jesus, leaving his hunger and thirst unsatisfied would have been unthinkable, impossible. She had a clear duty as a hostess to which she turned without question.

Many people in our churches today, especially the churches where our social tasks and responsibilities are stressed, are the spiritual heirs of Martha. Religion has one primary meaning to them—service. They see the church as an institution whose function is to uncover more and more areas of human need and to enter into those areas with its special concerns and special skills, its special contributions to the whole human effort. They want to build an economic order in their communities and throughout the world in which every man, regardless of his race, religion or nationality, shall have his fair share of the world's opportunities.

We should all be grateful to these modern Marthas for the enormous benefits we have received from their endeavors. We have all seen them, in the classroom, the hospital, the law court; in downtown offices, shops and stores; and working with innumerable committees, the same people always showing up whenever and wherever there is a good cause to be served, their faces drawn, their eyes glazed from lack of sleep, their minds, like that of their patron saint, "distracted with much serving."

They take their religion seriously, and by religion they mean brotherhood, freedom and social service. It is to the concern of this hard working group that we owe much of our civil rights, our religious freedom and our humanitarian legislation. They are reformers, principally, and they don't care whether organized religion includes anything else within its scope or not. Many would prefer that it didn't. Psalm singing is a little out of their line. Responsive readings leave them cold. Prayers actually irritate them, for they consider them unnecessary and often hypocritical.

We owe much to these practical-minded people. They will concede that man does not live by bread alone, but bread he must have, they insist, and that before anything else, for without it he must die. And they point out that religion has too often been indifferent to the basic needs of men, offering men promises of future glory as a compensation for a lifetime of misery and wretchedness in the present. The Marthas of the world have kept religion honest and made it a thing very much of this world. Furthermore,

by their example they have illuminated the principle that a man finds his own fulfillment in working for the benefit of others.

But what about the Marys of the world? While the Marthas are busy bustling about serving on church boards and committees, working with school and community agencies, lining up PTA, Camp Fire and Scout groups, meeting with service clubs, etc., are the people who just sit and think doing anyone any good? I realize that in our Occidental civilization it is pretty hard to find such a person. The West is a land of Marthas. People who want to think are considered rather impractical dreamers. Pure and unadulterated reflection for its own sake is discouraged.

People used to have more time for that sort of thing. A man could sit and watch the vapor rising from a tea kettle and come up with the idea for a steam engine. Or he could sit idly in an orchard and, reasoning from the fall of an apple, develop a very complex law of gravitation. Or he could tarry in his bath until he had formulated the law of floating bodies. Nowadays we leave such idle pursuits to specialists—a few devotees of pure science, a few philosophers and others equally out of contact with the world of stocks and bonds, washing and ironing, and cabbages and kings. The rest of us have forgotten the greater reality, the one point for which the whole of Milton's "Sonnet on His Blindness" was written, that "They also serve who only stand and wait."

The ideal balance would achieve in our religious lives something of a golden mean. What is necessary for the transformation of the total personality of man is a synthesis of meditation and work. Neither is complete without the other. Meditations and prayers, hymns and readings, sermons and discourses are pretty futile and sterile unless they are responsible for some changes in our attitudes and actions. Worse than that, they are fraudulent and dishonest, for they promise something they do not bring into realization. But it is also true that the end product of religion must be based on more than superficial thought and feeling. In other words, we may come to church in order to feel good, but we should leave the church determined to do good. We cannot separate the worship of God from the service of man without doing violence to both, for worship and work are but two modes of the selfsame spirit.

Religious liberals are committed to the theory of an unfolding truth, to the proposition that the appearance of reality is in constant change. We subscribe to the scientific method because scientific conclusions are always tentative and open to modification. We maintain this same attitude with respect to religious truth, knowing that all truth can no more be contained within the narrow bounds of one doctrine or one book than all the water of a fountain can be contained in one pitcher. Each one fills his pitcher and takes away as much as he can and no more. But truth is infinite and inexhaustible, and we have to keep returning to it for a fresh draught or it grows stale and useless.

We do not know the substances of the ideas Jesus shared with Mary on that day when he stopped in the home of these two sisters in the unnamed village. We do not even know his subject. It might very appropriately have been a parable which Gotama Buddha had related to a princely pupil of his some five hundred years earlier, if he had been familiar with it.

Two cronies came to a deserted village and, finding a heap of discarded hemp, they divided it and carried it away. A little farther along they discovered a quantity of hempen thread thrown away. "This is just the thing we want hemp for," said one. "Let us throw away our hemp and each take a load of this hempen thread." "I've brought this load of hemp a long way, friend," said the other, "and it's well tied up—that's enough for me. You choose for yourself." So the first changed his load for a load of hempen thread.

They went on and came to another village street, and another, and another. At each street crossing they discovered something more valuable than they had seen before. And at each place the one crony made a change for the better while the other retained his original load, so that in the end, one of the companions came out with a load of gold and the other with a load of hemp.

In the mature mind, the mind that is free and unencumbered by the paralyzing crust of dogma, the search for the ultimate reality goes on. It does not stop with the discovery of the first load of hemp, "well tied up" though it may be. It goes on to larger, worthier freight. What we are all looking for is what Schweitzer found while on an extended canoe trip up the Ogowe River, an ethic we can translate into our own terms and live by—a philosophy of the ultimate and transcendent meaning of human exisitence. Martha found it through service, Mary through worship, and it was Mary who chose "the good portion."

We need to examine our motives. Why are we, as Paul says about married women, "anxious about worldly affairs?" Is it to escape some hidden defect of our own? What makes us run from one meeting to the next? Is it really a boundless concern for community welfare or lack of concern for the welfare of our own families? The church cannot answer these questions, but

it ought to raise them. It is up to each of us to answer them for himself. But the church can provide a motivation and a background for critical self-analysis, and does. Further than that it cannot go.

Our problem as liberals may be that we are only half free. We have renounced the old, traditional ideas and modes of thought. We have set our feet on the road of progress and have found a load of hemp, but we are quite satisfied to stop with that, unaware of the gold of ultimate truth that is available. We have achieved freedom *from* something, but have failed to go on to attain freedom *for* something. We have carried off a successful rebellion, considered in negative terms, but we have formulated no new positive affirmations in the place of that which we have rejected. We accept science as the fountainhead of continuing, evolving truth, but we no longer take the truths of religion seriously. We have been diverting ourselves, to echo the thought of Newton, like a boy playing along the seashore, now and then finding a "smoother pebble or a prettier shell," while the great ocean of truth lies all undiscovered before us.

I speak for the eternal verities, common to all times and places, the subject matter of all the great religions. Worship need not be stodgy and trite and traditional. We may look for new ways to express the old realities. But express them somehow we must, or we lose contact with something precious and well nigh indispensable to right living. To the inspiration of the worship-experience we must constantly return.

Sri Ramakrishna reveals to us a very profound psychological truth in the parable of the wood-cutter who led a life of poverty until he met a wise man on the road one day who advised him to proceed onward into the interior recesses of the forest, indicating to him that he would be a gainer thereby. The wood-cutter obeyed and proceeded onward until he came to a sandalwood tree, where he cut many logs and derived much profit.

Then he began to wonder why the wise man had not told him anything about the wood of the sandal tree, but had simply advised him to go deeper into the forest. So the next day he went on beyond the sandalwood grove and came upon a copper mine, and he took with him as much copper as he could carry in a day's time and got much money by it. Each succeeding day he went still farther into the forest, passing his earlier discoveries by, and each day his search was rewarded by the discovery of greater and greater treasure, until at last he became exceedingly rich.

"Such is also the case with the man who aspires after true knowledge," comments Ramakrishna. "If he does not stop in his progress after attaining a few extraordinary powers, he at last becomes really rich in the eternal knowledge of truth."

The forest of Ramakrishna's parable is the undiscovered country within, where the ultimate reality is hidden. It is the soul of man, which is the soul and substance of the universe in microcosm. It is this reality which we seek to uncover and reveal in increasing measure in the service of worship. Thus worship in its most profound sense becomes "the better portion" of the whole religious enterprise, because it is antecedent to any intelligent understanding of ourselves, our world or each other. Concerns of the mind and heart must precede any action that is to be at all effective. The kind of attitude we have toward it and the measure of our wholehearted participation in it will determine pretty conclusively whether we come away from the experience with a load of hemp or a heap of gold.

Do We Know How to Worship?

Our critics say that Unitarians do not know how to worship. There must be some grounds for such a criticism. True, we are neither sacramentarians nor ritualists. Our Puritan tradition teaches us to look askance at all rites, forms, sacred customs, and prayer-books. They too easily become mere affectations, perfunctory and meaningless. The "holy show" makes no appeal to us. We say the first requisite of true worship is utter sincerity. Decency, dignity, harmony, and good taste are also essential; but where sincerity is real and deep it will automatically clothe itself with impressiveness, dignity, and beauty.

Looking at ourselves objectively we think we can claim that our Congregational manner of worship has on the whole justified itself. We seldom have occasion to question the sincerity of a modern Congregational minister. The mere fact that he goes into the ministry at all is pretty good proof of his sincerity and of the rightness of his motives. Our self-criticism, if any, is all too apt to be caused by two thoughtless failings: lack of good taste in the sequence of items, and failure to recognize opportunities. For example: after a fervent pastoral prayer that moves us by its genuineness, why must we wince over the notices? The annual fair of the Ladies' Aid; the supper that will cost only 99 cents; the coffee hour following the benediction. Such mistakes can ruin the total effect of the service.

There is one instance of the lost opportunity which, to be sure, falls only at rare intervals, the installation of a new minister, but is a real

opportunity really lost. Here is the church well filled, for the whole community is interested. After the brief preliminaries the Chairman of the Prudential Committee and the new minister rise; the Chairman asks the members to rise; he reminds them of the purpose of the occasion; then turns to the minister and repeats the formula of installation. Then the new minister repeats the brief formula of acceptance, and that is the first time the sound of his voice has been heard. That formula and the benediction are the only words he speaks. Everybody wants to hear something from him, enough at least to form a first impression, but they are disappointed. What a mistake! The new minister's heart is full. Why should he not make his acceptance in a ten-minute address which would give him a chance to interpret the occasion from his point of view, and to give some expression to the hope and the high resolve that he himself feels? You may say that such a practice would protract the service of installation to wearisome lengths. Apparently this was no hardship in the old days. The new minister was being inducted into an office which he was expected to hold for life. It was most desirable to give him the best send-off possible. Some beloved old parson in the Conference should be asked to preach a substantial sermon, dealing with the theological problems and issues of the hour. A welcome must be extended by the President of the Conference, as well as by the ministers of the other churches in town. All this made for a decidedly formidable occasion, but considering its importance the more formidable it was the better.

Ideas have changed however. A lengthy service is to be avoided these days; it should not take more than one hour at most. And after all is considered such a service is no place for a sermon. Everything that the sermon can add to the total effect may be added far more fittingly in a ten or fifteen minute address of acceptance from the new minister himself. Therefore it would be wise to omit the sermon altogether, and devote ten of the thirty or forty minutes thus saved to the Response from the Candidate.

We have a recent actual example of this innovation. When Rev. Wallace W. Robbins was installed on the fourth of last November as minister of the First Unitarian Church in Worcester, he saw the opportunity and refused to let it escape. He made a ten-minute response, which is herewith printed in full. Read it; and judge for yourself how greatly the service must have been enriched by this innovation. We hope it will become an accepted custom.

THE RESPONSE

Worcester, while an old New England city which rests upon the bowed backs of ancient but living traditions of Puritan Massachusetts, is a modern city with characteristics as broadly American as any of the great cities of our country. Here amongst the old and famous families of the early days have settled the Swedes, the Irish, the Italians, the Armenians, the French, the Jews, the British, the Germans, the Poles, the Czechs, and more: all the peoples of the world are tributary to the great river of population which, through successive generations, waters the civic, professional, and business enterprise of our community.

Although our first minister, Aaron Bancroft, in 1785, had the excitement of pioneering the second parish in a country town of a scant two thousand in the midst of rural Massachusetts, I have no loss; for it is given to my time to throw open the doors to men of racial variety and composite temperament, to welcome all who are led to worship here to the bread and wine of one family.

I have been heartened, too, by the welcoming letters and cordial words from my fellow ministers. During these weeks of my residence, I have been made aware of the affection and loyalty of the people in supporting their churches and their clergy. It is good to be in company with such devoted persons, and I am eager to take my place amongst the ministers of the city.

We are set in the midst of many famous religious traditions: some of great antiquity, all bear in them the truth of general revelation. Here the Talmudic scholar, with tired eyes, searches the wisdom of God's word. Here the bell of the Mass is heard, and men kneel in reverence. Here the Reformation and the Protestant lineage is vital, and living men, as sons their fathers, venerate the names of Luther, Calvin, Cranmer, Wesley, Conant, Robinson. Surely the Hound of Heaven tracks down the souls of men in labyrinthine ways. There is a plurality of the pathways of the spirit, but a singleness of God's purpose.

May this church and my ministry ever seek that oneness of God and never turn from that high destiny to the dark byways of quarrels and competitive struggles which interrupt the pilgrimage of man.

Not everyone must come into this church to have her service. Grace has no boundaries and love, no limits. We need to pray for ourselves, but we must also pray for those, who, through doubt, rebellion, pain and anger, can not pray for themselves. As others have their ways of religion so do we have our faith, and, in honest

difference, we order our lives together, but to pray for all men is our first principle.

We aspire to be unconditionally catholic and to take into account all men: we want an unmodified catholicity which refuses to disassociate mankind and abhors that which scatters men into Ghettoes or forces upon them an ultimate loneliness.

For ourselves and for those who join us, we have a desire to live together in such affection as will allow us, not to feel threatened by our differences, but happy in the liberty which encourages each one to make his words correspond with his thoughts, his acts with his conscience.

Ours is a noncreedal church, not because we have no beliefs, but because we will not be restrained in our beliefs.

Ours is a church of conscience, not because we hold that conscience is authority, but because it is the meeting place of man and God, and we dare not fence the spirit, nor would we close off from one another that sincerity of conversation with which souls must meet in religious association.

Ours is a church of reason, not because the mind of man is free of errors or infallible in its answers, but because the dialogue of mind with mind, and mind with itself, refines religious thought, and because the reason of man, like Jacob's ladder, provides the means of ascent and the way of visitation of faith.

Ours is a church of moral works, not because we think that morality is religion, nor that we would deny that faith is the enabling power of all works, but because we know no better way of showing our gratitude to God and our confidence in one another.

Our church is a brotherhood, for to us the family of God is such that even the meanest of human visages shows a tracery, however faint or marred by the mutations of life, of a lost but perfect image: our brother reminds us of our Father.

Our church does not profess to be an association of the saints, nor a gathering of the saved, nor will we turn anyone away from our fellowship as unworthy, for we are ourselves unworthy, and we know full well that we should never recognize an evil in another man if we had not first identified it in ourselves, and we confess that we need our trespasses to be forgiven. In this we do not despair; our hope lies beyond us: there is a mercy which leads the wanderer home.

Our church holds the dead in sacred memory, the living in a goodly fellowship, and we do declare: In the love of truth and in the spirit of Jesus we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Finally, we would avoid what seems to us the most subtle and dangerous of all temptations for men to make of the church a substitute for God. Our Puritan forebears may have been overly cautious in refusing to adorn the church with art and statuary, but they were right in their motive which kept them from loving the church so much that they might forget the worship that was due to divinity alone. They refused to respect the images lest a strong veneration should pass into adulation: they curbed the power of the church lest is usurp, in the hearts of men, the fear that only God should elicit. Ours is a meeting house of quiet simplicity, and the people have elected and installed their own minister, but this should not put us off guard. Pride is a lurking evil and idolatry has an ingratiating way. Let us remember who we are: "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part, but when that which is perfect is come that which is in part shall be done away."

Thank you, my friends, for the trust with which you have invested me. Thank you, my reverend brothers, for the prayers which you made for me and the blessing which you gave me. May they all be upon this parish. As you receive my benediction, think of it as the first of many, which in this place, will be pronounced for you and all mankind.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Dr. Rusterholtz's article, "Our Father, who art in heaven," in the December *Christian Register,* was read with intense interest by us all, and found to be conspicuously well written, quiet, scholarly, and reverent. We agreed wholly, partly, or not at all, as the case might be; but we all found it provocative of further thought. This article is merely an attempt at that further thought.

The Lord's Prayer is far more autobiographical than we at first suppose. To study the origin of its phrases and their implications is a rewarding labor, for it will tell us a good deal about the workings of his own mind. The very first phrase, "Our Father who art in heaven," is so characteristic of his own thought that it lends authenticity to the whole passage. Only one man in the Nation could have fashioned the prayer.

Dr. Rusterholtz says that this form of address is a great improvement over the older Hebrew notion of God as a stern judge or king. It is more than an improvement; it is an innovation for which the Old Testament furnishes no adequate precedent. A glance at the concordance will show that while God is likened to a father in several places—"He is a father to the fatherless,"

"Like as a father pitieth his children," "Whom the Lord loveth he correcteth even as a father correcteth his son,"—we find but two prophets who positively affirm that God is our father: Jeremiah professes to quote God: "I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first-born." And Malachi asks his rhetorical question: "Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us?"

Two swallows do not make a summer. "Heavenly Father" is not a concept which Jesus found in the Old Testament, picked up, and carried on. Even if he got his education in the school of the Essenes he did not find this concept among them. It originated with himself, perhaps from some experience that came to him during the lost interval of twenty years of which we have no record. There seem to be grounds for the surmise that at some time during that period he was thrown into close daily companionship with his his own father Joseph the Just, who loved him with all the tenderness and fervor that an elderly father usually feels for his little boy. He took him seriously, never made fun of him, respected his natural pride, tried to understand his perplexities, answered his questions to the best of his ability, and won his complete confidence, his grateful dependence, and his adoring love. Because of this experience the term "father" became freighted with the deepest, happiest, most sustaining connotations that such a word can carry. In short, it became the most precious word in his vocabulary. Also, this experience taught him that right here in human hearts there is such a thing as fatherhood, with all its wealth of implications and corollaries. It is an earthly phenomenon, one of the commonest properties of mankind.

Now, Jesus may not have been a philosopher, but like most Orientals he was a logician. In his own words, we can trace his line of thought. All results must proceed from causes. The quality of the results is determined by a corresponding quality in the causes. Men do not gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles. Thorn bushes and thistle plants do not possess the qualities that are in grapes and figs. Therefore the tree is known by its fruit. Bad trees cannot bear good fruit, nor good trees bad fruit. Causes may not always pass on to their results all the qualities they possess; but no cause can pass on to its result a quality it does not possess. Therefore no result is superior to its causes. The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. Every good quality in the fruit must be, to the same extent at least, in the tree. What man of you, if his son shall ask bread, will give him a stone; or if he ask fish will give him a serpent? If ye, being evil, know how to give good things to your children, how much more shall your Father in heaven give good things to them that ask him? And if this quality of loving, proud, hopeful, beautiful fatherhood is one of your possessions, how much more must it be God's possession! Therefore, address your prayer to Our Father; and since the earth is full of fathers be perfectly specific and address it to Our Father in heaven.

So "Our Father who art in heaven" became inevitably the fitting form of address. But at this point Dr. Rusterholtz raises a very real difficulty. This form of address implies that Jesus thought of God as a Personality. Does not that fact "date" his prayer as of a bygone age, obsolete in our eyes? If God is a spirit or a principle how can we think of him as a personality? If we could ask Jesus to guide us through this perplexity he might fall back on the same "a fortiori" argument. Personality is a fact with us, some say the most important fact in life. We cannot deny it; we cannot understand it; we cannot get along without it. We do not know as yet whether the principles of life are the result of great, thoughtful, intuitive, perceptive personalities, prophets, men of vision, poets and seers, or whether the great personality is the product of untold generations of moral experimentation and discovery in which the principles of right living have played a foremost part. Even if we could decide which was the hen and which was the egg, we still could not say which came first. Therefore, this insoluble question of the Divine Personality is one that each man must decide for himself, consulting his own intuitive preference. No man has the right to criticize another's decision. As William James says, in a footnote in one of his essays: "If a man prefers to think of God in terms of personality Philosophy can make no objection."

Too easily we forget that adequate proof is just as necessary for denial as for affirmation. If I cannot prove the personality of God neither can you disprove it. Jesus had as good a right to think of God as Personality as we have to think of Him as non-personal spirit or principle. So much for that.

In other ways many people are troubled by further points in the Lord's Prayer. It is too supplicatory, and we know by reference to the other two prayers of his recorded in the Synoptics that supplication was not to his taste. "Your Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things"; it is unnecessary to beg for them. In the prayer of Matthew 11, 25, there are no supplications. In the prayer in Gethsamane there is a tentative suggestion of supplication: "Father,

if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." But it is instantly countermanded: "Nevertheless, not as I will but as thou wilt." Why then are there six definite supplications in the Lord's Prayer? Such trivial ones, at that. And how can he ask God not to lead us into temptation, implying thereby that God sometimes does?

The prayer was doubtless spoken in Aramaic, which was more a dialect than a language. Some years ago the suggestion was made that, since Aramaic verbs in the imperative tense have exactly the same form as in the present tense, the prayer can just as accurately be translated as follows: "Our Father who art in heaven, thy name is hallowed. Thy kingdom is coming. Thy will is being done on earth as it is in heaven. Each day thou givest us our daily bread. Thou forgivest us our trespasses according as we forgive those who trespass against us. Thou leadest us not into temptation, but deliverest us from evil."

But Dr. Rusterholtz knows as well as we do that neither his revision nor the one here offered will ever replace the familiar King James version. They will, we hope, serve for private consumption to explain, and to reconcile us to the needless difficulties we have found in the prayer. But the familiar version has gathered up into itself a vast treasure of sacred associations, and has become the single remaining bond that holds all varieties of Christians in one great fellowship, in which

"Each for the joy of the working, and each in his separate star,
Shall draw the thing as he sees it, for the God of things as they are."

It will go serenely on, the sweetest, most profound, most universal, and best beloved prayer that our human lips can frame.

"PROPHESY IN PART"

Lawrence Marvin Jaffa

"For we know in part and we prophesy in part but when that which is perfect is come then that which is in part shall be done away."

We prophesy in part necessarily; we cannot help it; and for three reasons. First: prophecy is incomplete because there are different religions. Second: prophecy is incomplete because prophets are sensitive to different aspects of life. Third: prophecy is incomplete because we prophesy in time, and all times are partial.

In each of the three reasons advanced for believing we prophesy in part, there has been a recurrent answer. When confronted with partiality in Religious Institutions we have transcended it by looking for universality, by loving individuals of all sects. Face to face with all the divergent views of reality we have seen them united by transcendent love. Recognizing the incompleteness of any time, we have yet seen that love abides.

Now, how do we analyze and understand this transcendent love? Henry Drummond preached a sermon, once, on 1 Cor. XIII, our same morning's scripture lesson. He called Love the "greatest Thing in the World" and he was right. He said Saint Paul first compared Love with other gifts, preferred it and then analyzed it. When we love, God is in us and we in Him. We are inhabited by the spirit of God. Our lives are raised to new heights of power and complex problems become simple. As mankind evolved from the group, self-conciousness came to him and with it the sense of morality, of right and wrong. God was comprehended as a Judge. Symbolically, the emergent, first man has been called "Adam." Symbolically, the man who made the next discovery, who saw that "God-consciousness" also belongs to man was called the "New Adam" and his New Testament was to a God of Love. Edwin Markham sums up this evolutionary step, "In love is all the law we need, In Christ is all the God we know." Upon first repeating these lines we are apt to think them partial, but let us be straight in our thinking. All the God we need to know is larger than the person of Jesus of Nazareth. The spirit of God transcends one personality, and speaks still today. The Spirit of God, and our intimate sense of the presence of God is universal. Men have called it "Messiah," "Illumination," "The Christ." When we are so inspired we have "In Christ . . . all the God we know." In this meaning we understand Henry Hallam Tweedy's prophecy "Till Christ is formed in all mankind and every land is Thine." If you will forgive a mundane analogy I will hasten to explain how this is meant as a universal rather than a partial insight. Consider all men as dry sponges and God as a great reservoir in which all of us have been dipped as we become individuals. Some of us dry out very rapidly as we contact this matter of fact, day to day world and seem to lose our ability to retouch the reservoir of spirit and eternal power. Jesus was so completely saturated with the Spirit of God that he even appeared to be different from other men. He was as a cloud of vapor exceeding the limits of his sponge. Emerson says, "Jesus Christ belonged to the true race of prophets . . . alone in all history he estimated the greatness of man. One man who was true to what is in you and me. He saw that God incarnates himself in man and evermore goes forth anew to take possession of his world. He said, in this jubilee of sublime emotion, 'I am divine. Through me, God acts; through me, speaks.

Would you see God, see me, or see thee, when thou also thinkest as I now think.' " Emerson studied many religions, even translated, or paraphrased, sacred Hindu poems but he said Jesus alone in history estimated the greatness of man. Jesus was one of the many who understood the greatness of God. Few have seen the greatness of man as he saw it. This is important to us because ours is a Church united in the love of truth and in the spirit of Jesus for the Worship of God *and* the service of man. Jesus believed that the God-conciousness which he felt would be shared by all men. He said, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and *greater works* than these shall he do. . . ." Jesus believed we could be like him and he told us to be perfect. It is to this vision of humanity that he calls us. Because I believe we can do such works and because I believe man is as great as Jesus of Nazareth believed, I accepted ordination as a Unitarian Minister. I believe it is important to be true to what Jesus believed was in me and in you.

Because of this sense of calling I dare to speak intimately to you today. This is my attempt to prophesy in part.

I believe that humanity is making Progress Onward and Upward forever. I believe that the consciousness of God which Jesus exemplified will someday be the universal experience of the human race. Just as our understanding of the physical world is expanding from three dimensional description to a fourth dimension, so our consciousness is developing. Once our ancestor was group conscious, only, then he emerged as MAN, a self-conscious, speaking, morally perceptive individual. Now dawning among us, first in isolated Prophets, gradually with greater frequency, comes God-consciousness. Be assured this is a step forward and upward in evolution. Edmund Hamilton Sears, a Unitarian minister, wrote more verses than we usually sing of "It came upon the midnight clear." He understood the spiraling ascent of man, he rightly saw the golden age ahead of us, he prophesied in part: "For lo! the days are hastening on, by prophet bards foretold, When with the ever circling years comes round the age of gold; When peace shall over all the earth It's ancient splendors fling And the whole world give back the song Which now the angels sing."

Dr. Maurice Bucke published a book "Cosmic Consciousness" in 1901 which prophesied in Part. Ouspensky wrote, in 1924, "Tertium Organum," which filled in the picture and brought it closer to the perfect. It remains for us in the tradition of the intellectually free to be most sensitive to the next development in man. Read these books. Examine your life and your experience and I prophesy you will find a new dimension for your faith. This has been my experience. Like anyone else I have often felt a great hiatus between my aspirations and my accomplishments. I would be a better son, a better brother, a better husband and father than I am. The understanding of my family, their love bridges that gap. I would be a better teacher. I dream of helping my pupils make up in one year whatever they may have missed. I hope I can give to each one an enthusiasm for education that will change his life. Sometimes this proves beyond my power. What I am able to do as a teacher is to find something to love in each of my pupils and find that they respond to my seeking by strengthening in themselves that which I have praised. It is the same story with Scouts. For 20 years I have aspired to well-run meetings, regular advancement, and year around programming. I could still be a better Scout Leader but I have found a ready response to some one who cares that has given me success despite my shortcomings by the handbook. Years ago I wondered if I would be a good naval officer and was told I would be too soft-hearted but I would be a good chaplain. The navy trained me as a supply officer, however. Those of you who have enjoyed "Mr. Robert" will know why it brought tears to my eyes. I have known Navy officers like each of those in the play. I have seen groups of men respond as the "Reluctant's" crew did to Mr. Roberts. Finally I would be a better minister than I am. I would seriously like to be what Emerson asked graduating Theologues to be, "Yourself a newborn bard of the Holy Ghost, cast behind you all conformity, and acquaint men at first hand with Deity . . . when you meet . . . men or women, be to them a divine man; be to them thought and virtue; let their timid aspirations find in you a friend. . . ." I would be this but I fall short. I would help all to a more joyous sense of partnership with God, but what I can be is another human being's friend. We prophesy in Part.

James Russell Lowell refers to "texts of despair or hope, of joy or moan." Mine, despite these frequent senses of failure to live as largely as I would, is a text of hope. Mine is a tale of Joy. I feel compelled to testify to it. Mine is an optimistic faith. I have always tried to preach as an optimist and sometimes I have been told this was possible only because I have led a sheltered life without facing obstacles. Now I rejoice that I have come through four months of hospitalization and six months more of convalescence with the same faith, larger, deeper, surer perhaps, but just as optimistic as before. "All things work together for good for them that love God." I believe that life is Good. I believe that life has

Purpose. I agree with George Eliot: "Life is being shaped to glorious ends." I agree with Joel: "God will do great things." I agree with Paul: "That which is perfect will come." I agree with Henry Hallam Tweedy that to God there is "no child unsought." The plan is perfect and complete. As we evolve, as all of us enter into the consciousness of God we will "know even as we are known." I believe that we prophesy in part but we shall know. God is love and as we enlarge our loving, as we transcend differences in Religions and love individuals, as we accept divergent accents and paths of life and love the potential in each person, as we transcend time and become the beloved community of memory and hope we will know that which is Perfect. I prophesy this because I believe that as I have found an answer when sought for my professional shortcomings by caring for people, just so God is there when sought to offer us more love and caring than we have yet dreamed. I now know better what Jesus meant when he said, "Seek and ye shall find." I know that life is worth the search. I know with Lowell that "God is not dumb that he should speak no more." I know God answers us when we ask. God will pour out his spirit upon all flesh. Let each of us be true to the vision of Jesus of Nazareth. Let us seek to be what he saw in you and me. Let us dare to live in Faith and Hope and Love. These three abide and "the Greatest of these is Love."

GOOD TONGUE

Ford Lewis

"He serves all who dares be true"

Ideas are the vehicles we use to transmit our culture from one person to another, and from one generation to the next. They are the capsules in which time is compressed and made available to the present. Through ideas, and the accumulated experience of the race they represent, we can, in a sense, live indefinitely. They enable us to retrace our steps backward vicariously into a misty and ancient infinity. At the other end of the scale they make it possible for us to project our character, our hopes and our destiny into the far future. But if ideas are to be effective in guiding action—and what other motivation to action is there?—they must be conveyed through words "fitly spoken." The semantics of integrity and wholeness require us to be constantly alert to improve the process of knowing and sharing at both ends of the communication line.

In the rabbinical literature the story is told of Rabbi ben Gamaliel who said to his servant: "Go and buy me some good food in the market." The servant went, and soon returned with a cut of beef tongue. The rabbi then said: "Go and buy me some bad food in the market." Again the servant returned with tongue. Then the rabbi asked: "What is this? When I told you to get good food, you bought me tongue; and when I told you to get bad food, you also bought me tongue." Whereupon the wise old servant replied: "Good comes from it, and bad comes from it. When the tongue is good then nothing is better; and when it is bad, there is nothing worse."

For us who want to be mature and secure—and in this longing we must include everyone—may good come from the tongue in increasing measure; and may its bad effects be always overshadowed by the good. Let it be our constant effort to say only what we mean, and to mean what we should. And if we sometimes fail to achieve this high objective, may this imperfection in ourselves make us tolerant and understanding of the same trait in our fellow-men.

A TEACHER'S PRAYER

I ask thee for a sure and certain skill,
A patient and a consecrated will.
I ask thee for a white and perfect dream,
A vision of the wide and deep unseen.
Dear Lord, I need these things so much, so much!
A little child is plastic to my touch.

I ask thee for a love that understands
When it should reach, and when withdraw its hands,
A selflessness that flings the locked door wide
For youth to enter, while I step aside.
Dear Lord, I need these things so much, so much!
A human soul lies plastic to my touch.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

In answer to the letters that were provoked by the article on the Gospel of John in our May number, the author of the article submits the following.

Every new technique or facility that is invented and offered to the public goes through a period of experiment and observation which reveals its capacities, dangers and misuses. These observations are gathered up and articulated into what we may call the ethic of that invention. There is an ethic of the telephone, an ethic of the motor car. Just now we are deeply concerned over the ethic of the atom bomb.

A book has always possessed great influence, even authority. It reaches unlimited numbers; it impresses all with its authority of printer's ink; it sways their thoughts and convictions; it is capable of great benefit and great harm. Most emphatically there is an ethic of the book, that still speaks in peremptory accents.

The Old Testament's books, dealing with the Law, the Prophets, and the Chronicles of Israel were doubtless copied by the scribes with faithful accuracy. But during the first centuries of Christianity when the Roman Empire was seething with theological arguments and contentions, the book became a most efficacious instrument for influencing men's opinions. There was as yet no ethic of the book strong enough to check the temptation to misuse it. Any man who greatly wanted his idea of Christ and Christianity to prevail, had only to write a book setting forth his interpretations as historical record, and presenting his pet theories as statements of fact. Such books we call "tendency writings," and they are too apt to be misleading, highly biased by wishful thinking to be trusted. At the time it may have been quite proper to write such books; perhaps people knew how to take them; but these tendency writings are a nuisance to the modern critical scholar.

My chief point in the article is that the Gospel of John is regrettable because it is so emphatically a tendency writing. As history we cannot trust it at all. As theology it appeals to those who like that sort of theology. It offers them an authority which they accept (because they want to) as valid, but which others reject as factitious, and so greatly accentuate the note of acrimony. Our Christianity would doubtless be a far more harmonious and united body if the book had never been written.

By all means read it, quote it, use it if you want to; but know what you are doing. It contains many beautiful things, but one cannot use it as history or biography. We wonder if it could have been published today. We suspect that a well-developed ethic of the book would step in and bid the publisher beware.

PRAYER

(This prayer was offered by the minister of the First Church in Plymouth on the occasion of the anniversary service of the Pilgrim Covenant drawn in 1606 in Scrooby, England, and reaffirmed in Leyden and Plymouth. The Covenant marked the gathering of the first Pilgrim society 350 years ago.)

We thank Thee, O God, for the wonderful gift of memory by which a vast world becomes our home through intimate and happy moments of recollections of bravery and fidelity. On this anniversary occasion we rejoice to remember that thou hast never left thyself without a witness in the world. By the words of wise leaders and the courageous deeds of brave fathers and a heritage strong with intimations of thy hand working out thy purposes we are reminded that the God of our fathers is our God. Thou didst call our fathers into covenant with Thee, and didst point for them a refuge from oppression, and didst guide them through deep waters and set their feet in a strange and wild place, but thou didst not forget them. These, in their turn, remembered Thee, their God and our God, and put their trust and affection in Thee. These were noble men and women, whose courage and righteousness hath not been forgotten, and whose names shall be kept in everlasting remembrance.

Grant to us, O God, that we the inheritors of their renown, the heirs of their liberty, may possess their courage and fidelity and faith. May we never forget the discipline that convictions demand and may we covenant with Thee anew to walk in thy ways. We would walk with certain steps, but with open minds and with enough quietness to hear thy gentle biddings. This is the prayer we offer Thee, blessed and eternal Lord God, because today we remember—we remember thy works and the works of our fathers and we would be worthy sons and daughters of thine and theirs, and faithful brethren of thy Greatest Son, whom men are pleased to call Lord, and in whose name we make this prayer. *Amen.*